

ONE CHURCH, ONE JOURNEY *for youth ministry*

AN ABRIDGED GUIDE THROUGH
'A PROCESS OF ECCLESIAL RENEWAL 2020-2024'

Welcome!

We are so glad to be sharing this booklet with you.

In the following pages, there is plenty about what One Church, One Journey actually is. We're here to tell you that we've made a bitesize version of the original document for you to use.

You could technically read through this booklet in about 30 minutes, but we kindly ask you not to do that. This text is not intended just to be read, but it's here to inspire reflection and, ultimately, to drive action. It aims to guide our journey.

One day, while discussing this 'journey', a wise friend shared with us how each of our journeys ought to look different. God's creativity is celebrated in this fact since each of us, as individuals and communities, has been made unique. The oneness of this journey lies in our embarking on it together, and in seeking the same destination.

So, we invite you to continue walking and to take on this journey as part of the Church in Malta. We too are on this journey and are ready to walk alongside you.

We pray that this process truly opens us to the will of God and the conversion of heart required to be witnesses to our nation.

How to use this booklet:

Each chapter starts with a quote from Scripture
and an image to aid reflection.

We invite you to sit with God's Word before reading
the chapter.

Do not think of each of us as one body with many members, but rather think of each of us as one body with many members, each with its own function, and these members are joined together in one body, and each of us is responsible for the others. In accordance with the will of God, we are called to live in unity, peace, and love, and to share with one another the gifts and graces that God has given to us.

The chapters contain a number of points.
This number corresponds to the chapter
number.

For example, Chapter 6 has 6 points.

Each point is followed by an invitation.
These invitations are a call to reflection and
action.

We encourage you to take these invitations to prayer.

1. The priesthood of the ordained that mediates between God and his people.
Our one people brings together five key charisms, each according to our particular gifts.
As we go forth to proclaim the Gospel through gestures of listening and welcoming, we become one body of Christ who, under the leadership of the Archbishop, are empowered to serve according to our particular gifts.
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As we go forth to proclaim the Gospel through gestures of listening and welcoming, we become one body of Christ who, under the leadership of the Archbishop, are empowered to serve according to our particular gifts.

Religious charisms are gifts of the Holy Spirit that enable people to live in a particular way. They are called to nurture and cultivate the charism in their lives and to share it with others. The charisms of the Church are the charisms of the Holy Spirit that enable people to live in a particular way. They are called to nurture and cultivate the charism in their lives and to share it with others.

2. Consecrated Life
The vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, in a lifestyle dedicated to prayer and service, symbolise with clarity how as the Church we ought to reflect the Kingdom.
Our local Church is blessed with many religious congregations, each with their own charisms.

Some technical words in the text are numbered.
You can find the meanings of these words at the
end of the booklet.

Invitation

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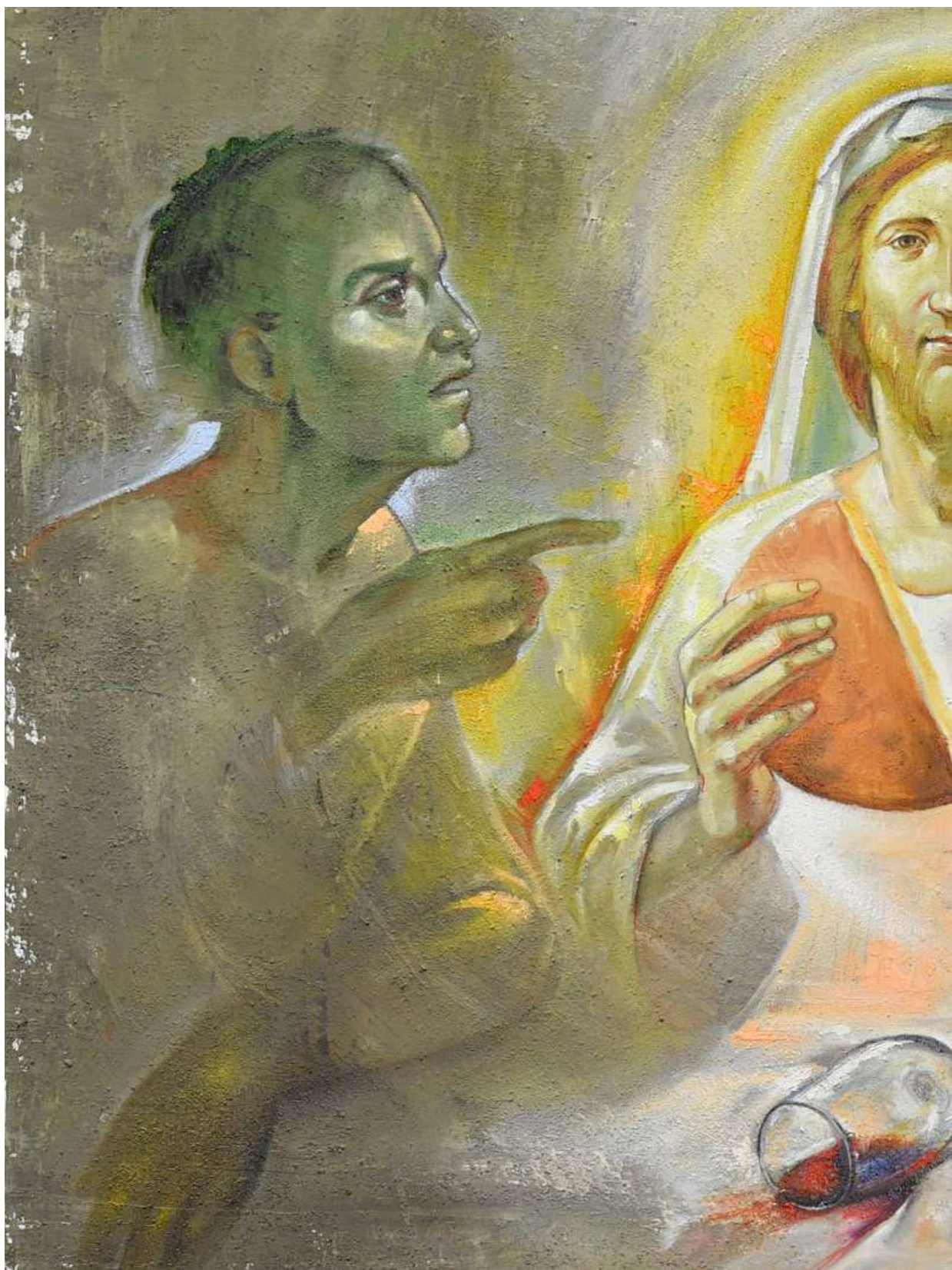
I N T R O D U C T I O N

The Icon of Emmaus

Fruit of his prayer and discernment¹, Archbishop Charles J. Scicluna presented the story of Emmaus as his hope for the diocese. This story provides us with a clear description of how Jesus chooses to walk with us as a Church, and so, how we too ought to walk with each other. As people involved in youth ministry, the choice of this passage should resonate with our hearts even further, being the same scripture given as a pastoral guide by Pope Francis in *Christus Vivit*.

The Icon of Emmaus is being presented to remind us that Jesus meets us in our darkest hour; he listens attentively; he presents to us his life-giving Word; he does not impose himself but rather waits for our invitation; and finally, he presents himself to us in the breaking of the bread. Through all these gestures, Christ is inviting us to a renewed discipleship², to a life-giving evangelisation, to a service rendered from the heart, and to a new birth in the Spirit.

This is the hope and the challenge that our Shepherds presented to us when they chose the Emmaus narrative as inspiration for our personal and communal discernment as a Church: that we fully take on our identity and calling as a Pilgrim People³ in Malta, who are given the mission to evangelize the land.





What was the process leading up to *One Church, One Journey*?

November 2018

Diocesan Assembly

- The local Church reflected on the reality it is in by looking back at the outcome of the 2003 Documents of the Diocesan Synod⁴.
 - » Archbishop Charles J. Scicluna proposed the narrative of the disciples of Emmaus (Lk 24:13-36) to inspire a process of discernment within the Church. The aim of this discernment is pastoral reform.

November 2019

Diocesan Assembly

- A draft document of this “process” was presented.
 - » Those present—representatives of all sectors in the Archdiocese—prayed, reflected and conversed together on the process, taking their insights to the whole Assembly.

2019 - 2020

- Insights presented at the Diocesan Assembly & others were combined, reflected upon, and condensed to the concrete pastoral initiatives that the Archdiocese will be carrying out in the next few years.
 - » Bishop Joseph Galea-Curmi led a process of in-depth listening with priests, religious and laity with the aim of deepening what Christ is saying to the Church in Malta through the Emmaus passage.

7th June 2020

- Archbishop Charles J. Scicluna presented the final document to the Church in Malta.
 - » A website to model the eightfold process to entities was launched.

An invitation for a synodal journey 2020-2024

One Church, One Journey

One Church, One Journey invites us, the People of God in Malta, to a process for spiritual renewal. Inspired by the story of Emmaus, this process seeks to enable ecclesial⁵ discernment, finding its fruition in pastoral action. It is to be taken as a synodal journey—following the same method of the Maltese Diocesan Synod 1999–2003.

This document is:

- Both a vision of the Church we hope to be and the concrete steps for our renewal.
- Written to bring about growth in attitudes and practices that require special attention among the Church in Malta.
- There to guide every part of the Church, each in its own way, in the same process towards communal discernment.

This process finds its basis in 4 attitudes inspired by Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation⁶ *Evangelii gaudium*:

- A Church that listens
- A Church that welcomes
- A Church that accompanies
- A Church that goes out

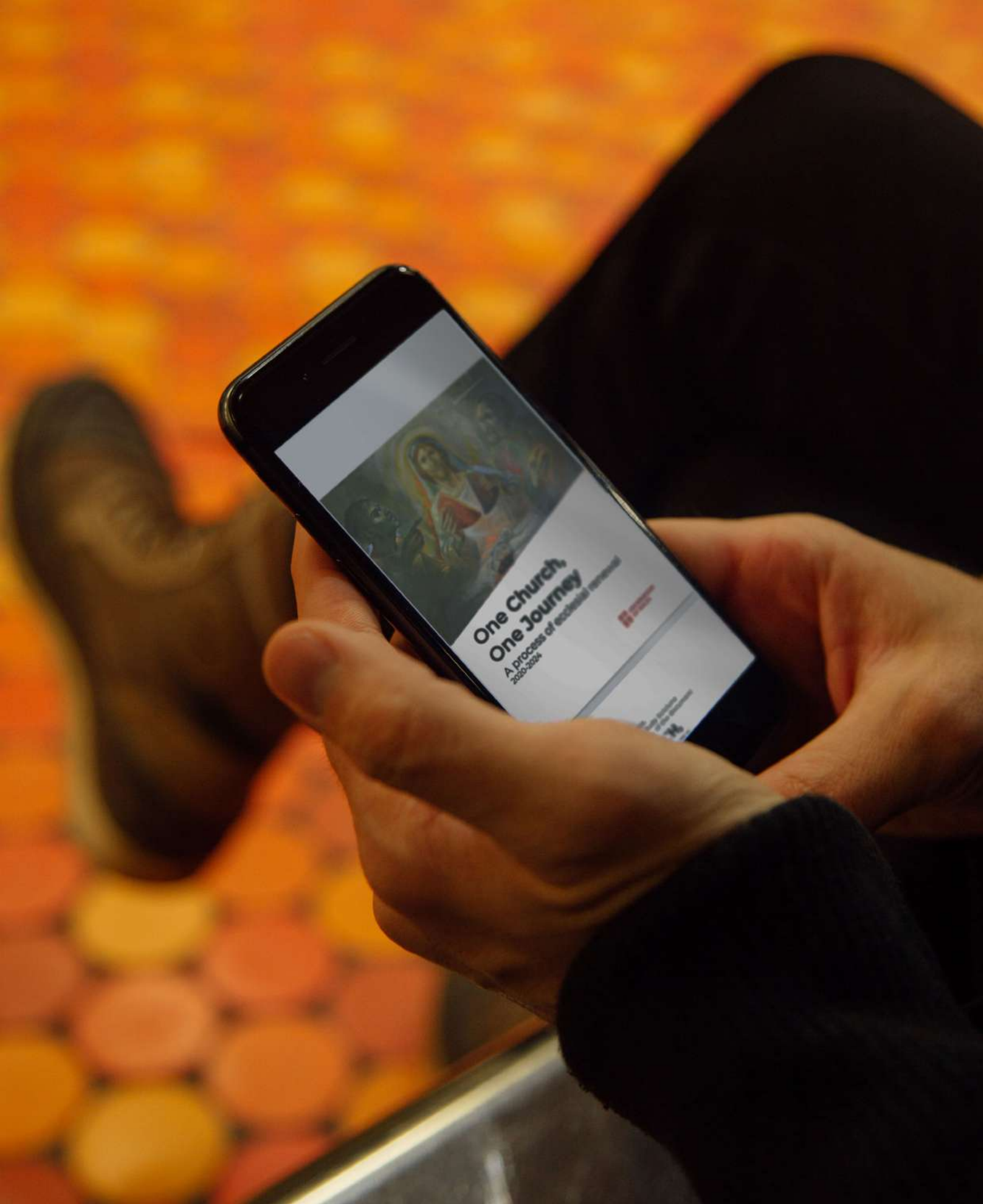
One Church, One Journey describes eight necessary markers of this synodal journey. These markers are not a series of tasks but, rather, they are an invitation to sit once again at the feet of Jesus and listen to what he has to teach us, both personally and as a Church. They aim to enable a process which develops organically as the result of each part of the body actively participating in this journey.

Above anything else, however, this is a process fuelled by the Holy Spirit. In the next 4 years, every part of the Church is to seek to rediscover and live-out more faithfully its particular gifts and charisms⁷, following the direction of the Holy Spirit.

The document *One Church, One Journey* can be found on:
journey.church.mt

or by scanning the QR code below.





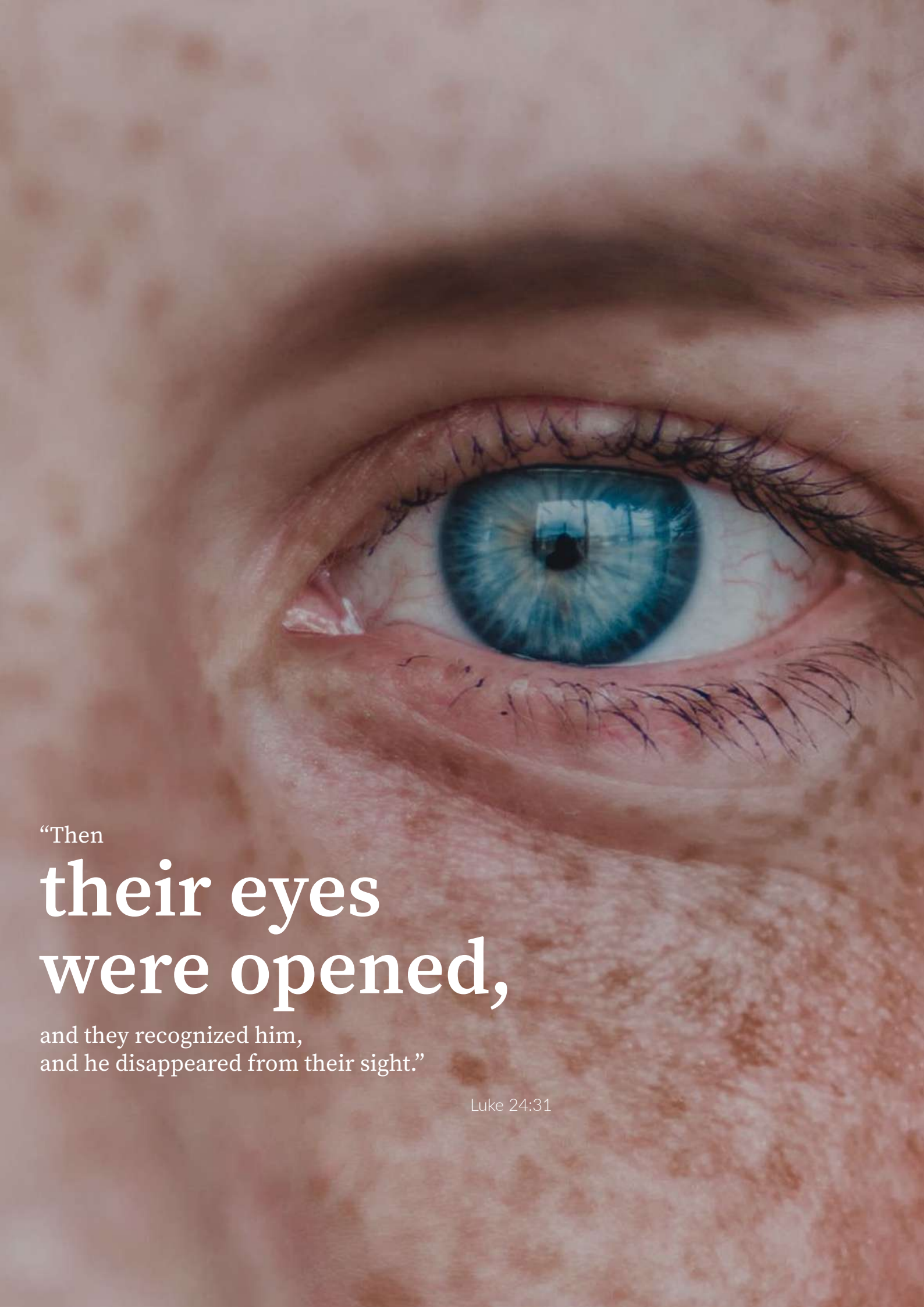
1



C H A P T E R O N E

■

OUR (RE) ENCOUNTER WITH CHRIST



“Then
**their eyes
were opened,**

and they recognized him,
and he disappeared from their sight.”

Luke 24:31

The Gospel of Luke (24:13-36) presents us with a model encounter of the disciples with the Risen Christ. Jesus met the two travelling disciples when they had given up hope. Just as Peter went back to fishing (see Jn 21:1-3), these two disciples - Cleophas and his companion - were going back to their previous lives. The disciples lost their unity and hope when they thought they had lost Christ.

On their journey away from Jerusalem, Jesus **seeks** them out, **walks** all the way with them and **explains** to them the Scriptures. The disciples, however, do not recognise him. When their journey comes to an end, Christ does not impose himself, but waits for the disciples' invitation. It is only after this moment of hospitality, of their seeing beyond the limits of their own lives and of showing care for the other, that Jesus opens their eyes through the breaking of the bread.

This brief encounter with the Risen Christ transformed the disoriented disciples into missionary disciples. It is this missionary discipleship² that fuelled their return to Jerusalem, where they met the Risen Christ and received the Holy Spirit. There they witnessed the ascension; they worshipped in the temple and anticipated the last days. The same disciples that were lost and afraid after his death, became the first "body of Christ".

Invitation

As disciples in Malta, we are being called to the same encounter with Christ. Jesus continuously seeks us out, walks with us and explains his Word when we have the ears to listen. He waits for our invitation, for an act of kindness and generosity, that he may reveal himself to us in all his glory. He longs to awaken in our hearts the same zeal and, through the Holy Spirit, continues to call us to be missionaries.

2

The background of the entire page is a vibrant blue marbled paper with swirling, organic patterns in various shades of blue, from deep navy to light turquoise. The texture is fluid and dynamic.

C H A P T E R T W O

A small, solid yellow square is positioned above the main title, centered horizontally.

A CHURCH THAT PROCLAIMS AND SERVES

“Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed
your feet, you also should wash one another’s
feet.

I have set you an example

that you should do as I have done for you.
Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his
master, nor is a messenger greater than the one
who sent him.”

John 13:14-16



Our encounter with Christ is fulfilled by proclaiming the gospel through concrete acts of service.

Throughout our history, the Maltese islands have been a safe haven for those at sea, those caught in a storm and those injured at war. The gospel came to our islands through the hospitality the island offered, welcoming St. Paul and his fellow men “with unusual kindness” (Acts 28:2).

Many times in our history, when our ancestors trusted that only God could sustain them in moments of trial, evangelization and service were the two hands that built our Church. This is visible even in our landscape, with our towns and countryside being dotted with religious monuments.

In the last century, the wellsprings of evangelization and service overflowed as people like St. Ġorġ Preca, Mons Giuseppe De Piro and Mons Mikiel Azzopardi brought to the forefront of our faith the spirituality of catechesis, the call to mission and the loving care of those marginalized. Nowadays, the Church in Malta remains dedicated to offering her hand of charity to those most in need. In collaboration with the State, the Church in Malta cares for the elderly; the dying; children with difficult backgrounds; those with material problems; those struggling with addiction; victims of domestic abuse; the homeless; and those seeking refuge and a home.

Although the type of suffering in our country has changed, suffering remains present. Physical wounds have been joined by psychological and spiritual ones. People are weary with indifference, perplexed by cultural change, exhausted by the pace

Invitation

Continuing in our ancestors' footsteps, today we are challenged to carry on supporting migrants who risk their lives in our waters or who seek a new life in our land. Above all, we are called to place the safeguarding of human life and dignity at the centre of all our proclamation and service.

of life and burdened by silent suffering.

Therefore, following our encounter with Christ, and before being missioned anew, we must nurture our weary spirit through his Word and be reformed by imitating his self-emptying love.






3



C H A P T E R T H R E E

**A HOLY
PEOPLE
OF GOD IN
MALTA**



“You did not choose me, but

I chose you and appointed you

so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that
will last—and so that whatever you ask in my
name the Father will give you.”

John 15:16

Pope Francis reminds us that we are called to mission not only as individuals, but as an entire people. We are called to live out the gospel not in a conceptual way, but in one relevant to the culture in which we live. (*Evangelii gaudium*, 217-237)

Three aspects that build a people to become a true People of God are the land, history, and their expression of faith.

1. Our Land

The particularity of the land we are rooted in has defined much of who we are as a nation. This land that defines us is also the land that nurtures us, and so we must nurture and protect it too.

2. Our History

As a people, we are not only shaped by those who came before us, but also by the remnants of their stories. History provides us with the stories of the past and the moral lessons that come with them. It provides us with the support needed to live the present together and responsibly.

3. Our Expression of Faith

As the People of God, we are encouraged to spread our branches wide in our expression of faith, to touch all aspects of life in our land. Popular devotion reveals the most intimate aspect of a People's relationship with God, since it finds its origin in the expression of people's spontaneous prayers. It reveals how God encounters his people in that particular culture. We, therefore, betray ourselves when popular devotion and other expressions of worship become activities which serve the market and fuel division. Then, not only is our prayer made poor, but the Church itself becomes fragmented.

Invitation

*In his encyclical⁸ *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis calls for an "ecological conversion", where the effects of our encounter with Jesus become evident in our relationship with the world. This conversion needs to be a holistic one, which supports the dignity of human life, devoted to good stewardship⁹ of the Earth and is attuned to the connectedness of creation.*

Invitation

Each generation must aim to undo the mistakes of the past, finish what was left undone, fulfil its own hopes and aspirations, bear fruit and nurture its children.

Invitation


We are being invited to pray and celebrate the liturgy as more than mere ritual; we are asked to truly encounter Christ, nurture community and collaboration, to seek devotion and not self-gratification.

4

A detailed close-up photograph of a mechanical watch movement. The image shows several interlocking gears of different sizes, some with a polished brass finish and others with a dark, possibly steel or black-painted, finish. The gears are set against a dark, textured background that appears to be the internal plate of the watch. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the metallic surfaces and the intricate details of the gear teeth and the watch's internal structure. The overall tone is industrial and precise.

C H A P T E R F O U R

**PASTORAL
ATTITUDES
OF CHRIST
IN EMMAUS**



“Jesus himself

came near
& went with
them...”

Luke 24:15

As the Church, we are called to live the four pastoral attitudes that Christ teaches us in the story of Emmaus:

- To listen
- To welcome
- To accompany
- To go forth

1. A Church that Listens

First and foremost, “We need to be constantly trained in hearing the Word. The Church does not evangelize unless she constantly lets herself be evangelized.” (*Evangelii gaudium*, 174)

Secondly, we need to make ourselves available to listen, which is more than just hearing. Listening is when we decide to be more than just bystanders and be fully available to the other.

2. A Church that Welcomes

In the narrative of Emmaus, Christ only opened the eyes of the disciples when they opened themselves up and were willing to welcome the other. In welcoming others, not only do we discover ourselves in the process but we also grow more confident in the gifts freely given to us. Through concrete acts of welcome & extending friendship, we will rediscover our true calling - that of sharing the Good News through serving all.

Invitation

- We are first invited to put the gospel at the centre of our lives and every pastoral activity. We are called to practise listening to the Word of God, that we may grow to recognize his voice.
- We are invited to create shared spaces where we can get to know one another, especially with those who might see themselves outside the sheepfold. As a People of God, we are to be a community measured not by badges of belonging, but by our desire for a shared spirit of friendship and collaboration.

Invitation

We are called to welcome all without discrimination: those who have hurt us; those with whom we have rivalries (such as 'piki'); those who have different outlooks; those we've been told to mistrust; and the non-Maltese.

Invitation

As a Church, we have to be initiated—priests, religious and laity— into this ‘art of accompaniment’ that teaches us to remove our sandals before approaching the sacred ground of the other (Ex 3:5). The pace of this accompaniment:

- Must be steady and reassuring.
- Ought to reflect our closeness and our compassionate gaze.
- Seeks to heal, liberate and encourage growth in the Christian life. (EG, 169)

3. A Church that Accompanies

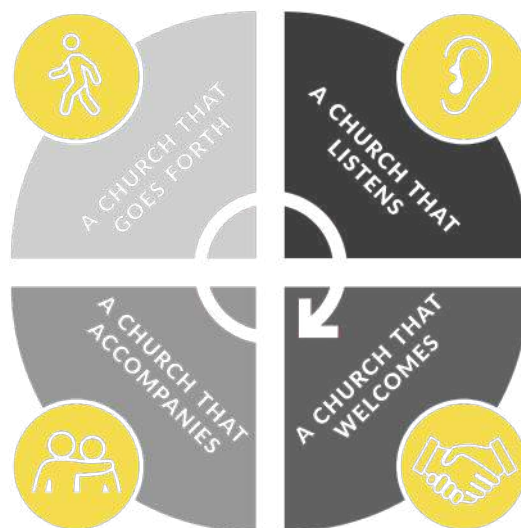
The Christian journey is marked by the path from death to rebirth, from the cross to the resurrection. This continual process of growth always implies suffering. Accompaniment is the willingness to suffer together for the betterment of another. It is also the courage to walk with another through the difficult, but necessary, path from death to rebirth.

4. A Church that Goes Forth

Pope Francis pleads: “I dream of a ‘missionary option’, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation” (*Evangelii gaudium*, 27).

Invitation

It is also the Church’s mission to equip and send missionary disciples to the ends of the Earth (Mk 16: 15; Acts 1: 8). As the People of God in Malta, we must seek and reach out to the new peripheries in our context, which may also be emerging in our very neighbourhoods. The calling is to see the unseen, those considered as the disposables of our society.






5



C H A P T E R F I V E

THE PEOPLE OF GOD



“Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and

**each member
belongs to all
the others.”**

Romans 12:3-5

As we go forth to proclaim the gospel through gestures of listening and welcome, we become one body in Christ who, under the leadership of the Archbishop, are empowered to serve according to our particular gifts.

The Church, as one community, brings together five key charisms⁷, each according to the distinct roles played by its members.

1. The Priesthood of the Ordained that Mediates between God and His People.

While the Church is the sacramental presence of God in the world, the priesthood of the ordained makes visible Christ's presence in the Church. The sacramental priesthood is crucial to the Church since it is through the sacraments that we can experience tangible signs of God's presence.

Invitation

Lived out authentically and faithfully, the priestly presence in the Church seeks to recover and to purify:

- *The Church's style of leadership.*
- *The language of its teachings.*
- *The people's devotions.*

Priests are invited to protect that which truly nurtures the People's devotion.

2. Consecrated Life

The vows of poverty, chastity and obedience in a lifestyle dedicated to prayer and service, symbolise with clarity how we, as the Church, ought to reflect the Kingdom.

Our local Church is blessed with many religious congregations, each with their own charisms.

Invitation

Religious congregations are called to nurture and cultivate their inherited charism for the good of the entire People of God. The perseverance of living the same charisms over centuries models how they can be adapted for the evangelization of today's Malta.

3. The Laity Involved in the Various Ministries in the Church

The primary mission of the laity rests on 2 complementary movements.

Invitation

- *As the Church community, we are called to become more and more invested in offering mutual support and accompaniment to parents as they raise their children in the faith.*
- *The laity is invited to constantly realign their service with the Church's primary mission of witness in the world.*

- a. The daily ministry of the many Christian parents called to nurture their families.

This ministry is indispensable since motherhood and fatherhood are the most foundational ways in which we imitate the love and mercy of God and the Church. This ministry is also extends to those who serve and accompany children, young people and families in different phases of their life.

- b. The participation in Christ's priesthood.

The faithful are called to exercise their baptismal priesthood through their participation, each according to his vocation, in Christ's mission. Many men and women serve in their parish life through various liturgical, prayer and social ministries. They also serve in other works of charity as well as in their professional services in Church institutions.



4. On Being Christians in the World

Christians do not separate themselves from the world through clothing or markings because their home and mission is the world itself, which they are called to sanctify. It is the joy of the gospel that sets the Christian apart.

5. All People of Goodwill Seeking the Truth

The Church is not just a community of the holy: it is also sinners who struggle and question. As long as those who struggle and question remain faithful and committed to the search for Truth, they are also seeking to have their eyes opened by Christ. Therefore, it is not necessarily the closeness to visible church structures that marks the authenticity of one's witness, but the heart being transformed by the Spirit.

Invitation


In every sphere of a person's life, the Christian is to be marked by their determination to seek the common good and protect the wellbeing of others. The measure of how "catholic" Malta is should not be how many are baptised and call themselves catholic. What makes us catholic is how we, embody the hope of the Kingdom at all levels of our society, through our active participation in it.

Invitation

Often those who sometimes push the "boundary" of what it means to be the Church are our families, friends and colleagues. Through these relationships, the Holy Spirit invites:

- *Those of us who see ourselves as being close to church structures to question the authenticity of our witness, and our willingness to be challenged.*
- *Those of us pushing the boundaries to return to the core of our faith in Jesus.*

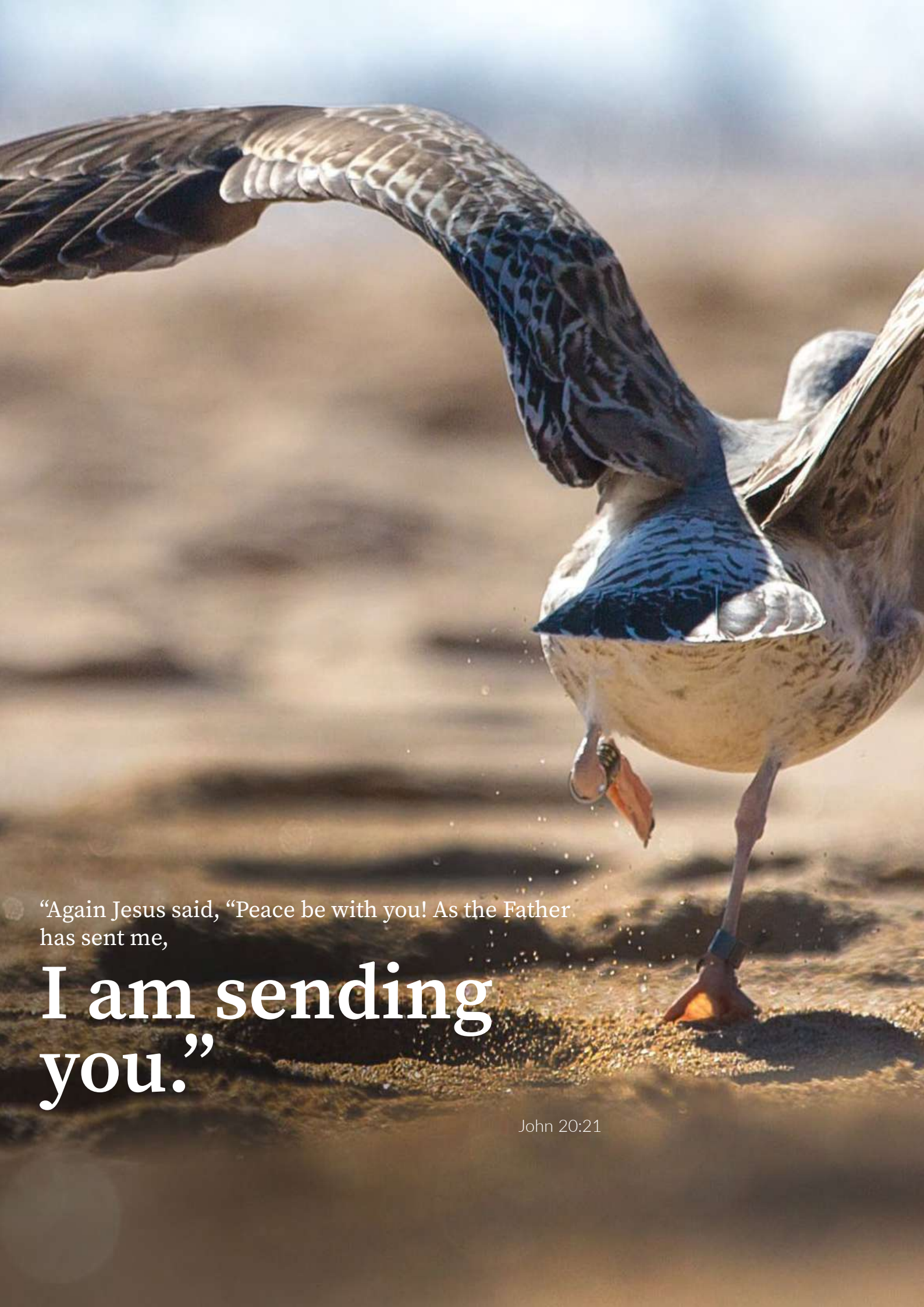
6



C H A P T E R S I X

■

A MISSIONED “PEOPLE OF GOD”



“Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father
has sent me,

**I am sending
you.”**

John 20:21

There are six distinct spaces in present-day Maltese society where we must discern how to be the best possible witness of Christ through the concrete actions of listening, welcome and accompaniment. As Pilgrim People³, we are being called to go where the Spirit is leading us.

1. Peripheries Where the Vulnerable Dwell

Throughout the Gospels, we see Christ meeting his chosen ones in their vulnerability, in their poverty. Christ calls us to follow his example and encounter “the least of these”.

In a country where we sometimes pride ourselves on knowing everything about each other, we often fail to see the suffering so present in our society. Present-day suffering is often hidden, and we often become desensitized to the suffering that we do see.

Invitation

It is our primary responsibility to be the eyes that see and the ears that hear the cries emerging from the peripheries. Then we can be responsive to all the wounded among us, no matter how hidden their suffering might be.

2. Spaces of Leisurely Encounter and Business Activity Where People Dream and Seek to Create Their Future

Spaces of encounter, where people come together to rest, talk, exchange ideas, be creative and collaborate is where the Holy Spirit seeks to sow seeds for the future.

Invitation

As a Church, we bear the responsibility to cultivate a culture of encounter in the Maltese context, one that is increasingly ethnically and religiously diverse. It ought to be a place where everyone is invited to actively participate in building a culture of integral ecological flourishing. Young people set an example due to their natural disposition to reach out, to think outside the box and try new things.

Invitation

The Church, all its institutions and us as the People of God must:

- *Educate for civic responsibility rather than instant gratification.*
- *Nurture an ethos of cooperation rather than competition.*
- *Seek an ecological conversion rather than think narrowly by focusing only on what is of immediate concern.*

3. Public Institutions that Regulate Our Life Together

Public institutions have the duty to:

- Safeguard our future as a nation.
- Promote justice, and be just in service of the public good.
- Empower the vulnerable and give voice to the disempowered.

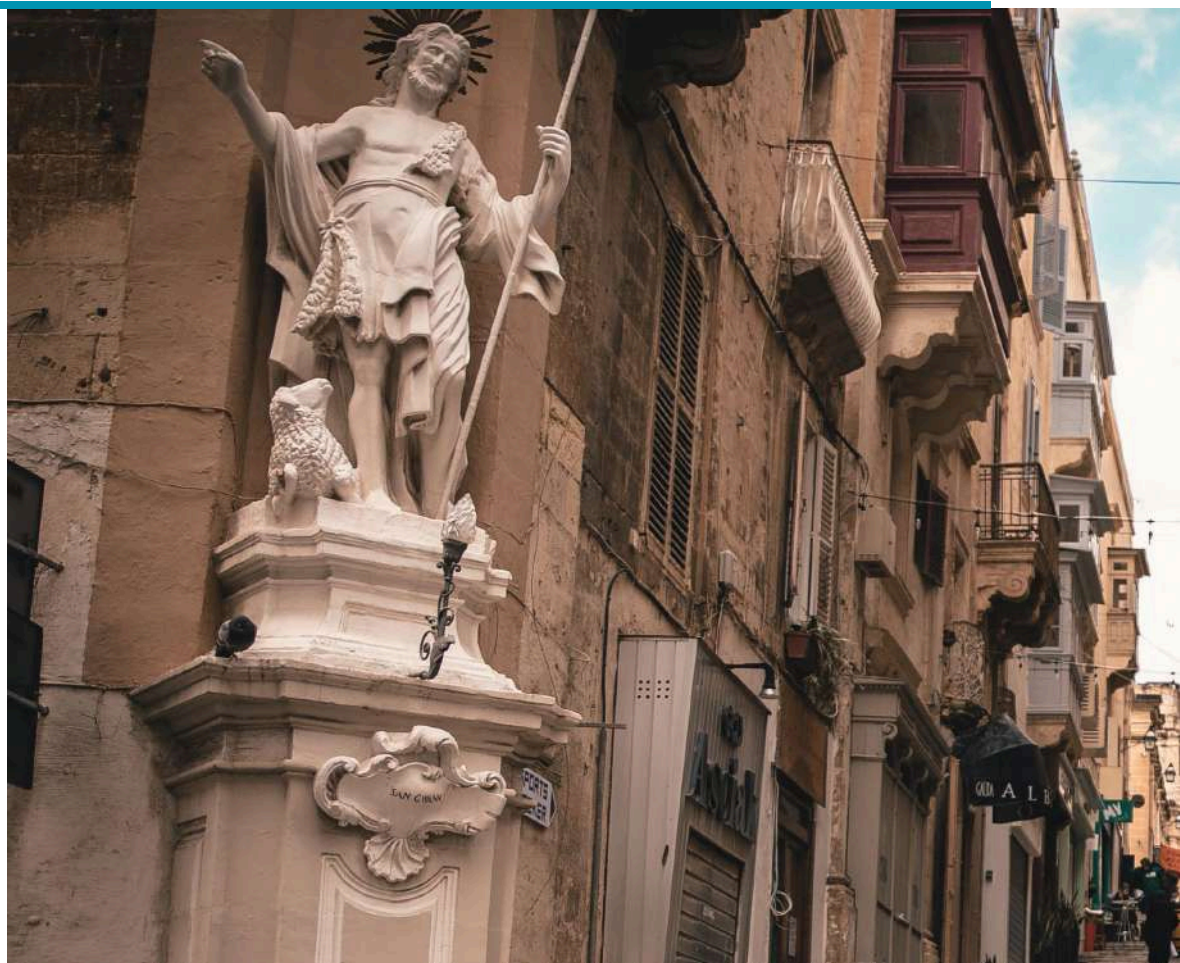
4. Spaces Occupied by the People of God, in Particular Our Parishes, Lay Movements and Religious Institutions

The Church's presence in society, through its institutions, is to be the light of the world and the salt of the Earth by operating not in the way of the world but of the Kingdom, conforming to the demands of the same gospel it preaches.

Invitation

The Church is invited to do this in two ways:

- *Institutions are called to witness and conform to the demands of the gospel. This is not to be done as a statement of rigid legalism. Rather, the Church's institutions are called to be true instruments of peace and justice that practise a preferential option for the poor and of mercy that dares to go the extra mile.*
- *The Church also has the responsibility to form society to seek an objective common good.*



5. Domestic Spaces

It is in our families that we learn to trust, work together, face conflicts, and most crucially, forgive. Our ability to be a forgiving and merciful People of God is measured in how well we live these graces in our domestic spaces.

Invitation

- Although the sacramental grace of marriage can protect against the many pressures that challenge family life, it is essential that the Church's structures and us, as the Church community, support marriage and the family.



Invitation

As the People of God we are invited to humanize this realm:

- *By looking at the digital extension of our minds with wonder, but without denying the richness of our physical bodies.*
- *By reaching out to one another and being the “communion of souls” we all humanly desire and hope for.*
- *By living experiences of authentic encounter and openness to dialogue, and by together weaving a more universal language of human solidarity and friendship online.*
- *By communicating in ways that break the cycles of manipulation and exploitation of people online.*

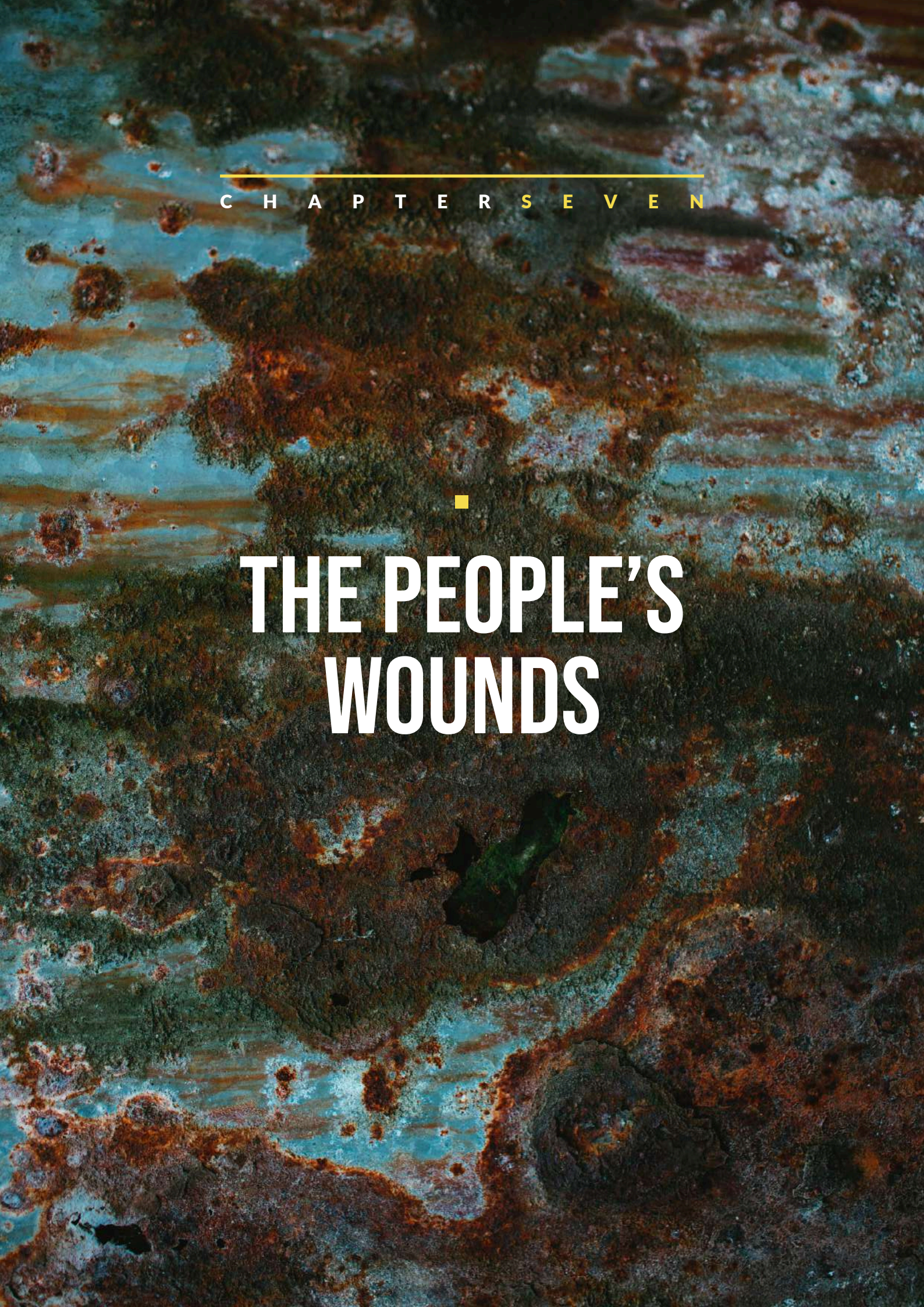
As the Church, we must also speak prophetically by insisting on the fundamental truths that are necessary for human flourishing. This is to be done without excluding any people or culture.

6. Augmented Digital Realm

Each one of the five spaces mentioned extends online, and so do their corresponding missions. The digital realm does not operate by the same patterns of the social relations we are used to, and therefore presents us with an ever new challenge of bringing the gospel to this ever-growing world.






The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of a heavily rusted metal surface. The rust is a mix of dark brown, orange, and reddish-brown, with patches of lighter, bluish-grey metal visible underneath. The texture is rough and uneven, with many small pits and larger areas of corrosion. A thin, horizontal yellow line is positioned above the chapter title.

C H A P T E R S E V E N

A small, solid yellow square is positioned above the main title.

THE PEOPLE'S WOUNDS



“He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness;

**by his wounds
you have been
healed.”**

1 Peter 2:24

The more our hearts and relationships are fractured, the more we are called to serve selflessly and patiently, so that God's love is experienced.

1. The Wounds in Our Memory, Personal and Collective

Oftentimes, suffering in and of itself leaves us feeling vulnerable. When our memories of pain remain unresolved, they also acquire a certain bitterness. In families and tight-knit communities such as our own, this bitterness is often contagious and passed on from one generation to the next. Healing does not come by forgetting our wounds, but by re-examining them with an attitude of love.

Invitation

We are invited to be Christ's hands by seeking ways in which to replace bitterness and revenge with forgiveness, and hatred with love.

2. The Wounds in Our Intimate Relationships

No man or woman is an island and our very humanity implies the desire to be persons-in-relationship. Our relationships shape a lot of who we are - in their very nature they ask of our vulnerability and trust. These, however, also come with the risk of betrayal. Such betrayal can either cause us to retreat or can challenge us to receive the grace of forgiveness.

Invitation

- *Since the family is the foundational school of forgiveness, as a Church, we are called to support families to overcome the stumbling block of conflict through the graces of the Holy Spirit.*
- *As the Church community, we ourselves need to be an exemplary family, rich in forgiveness and mercy.*

Invitation

As a Church, we are called to:

- Repair what is broken by acknowledging our failings, listening to one another and praying for the grace of forgiveness.
- Work towards not creating further divisions, which can be achieved by praying together; serving together; and appreciating each other's gifts and the beauty of our particular callings.

Invitation

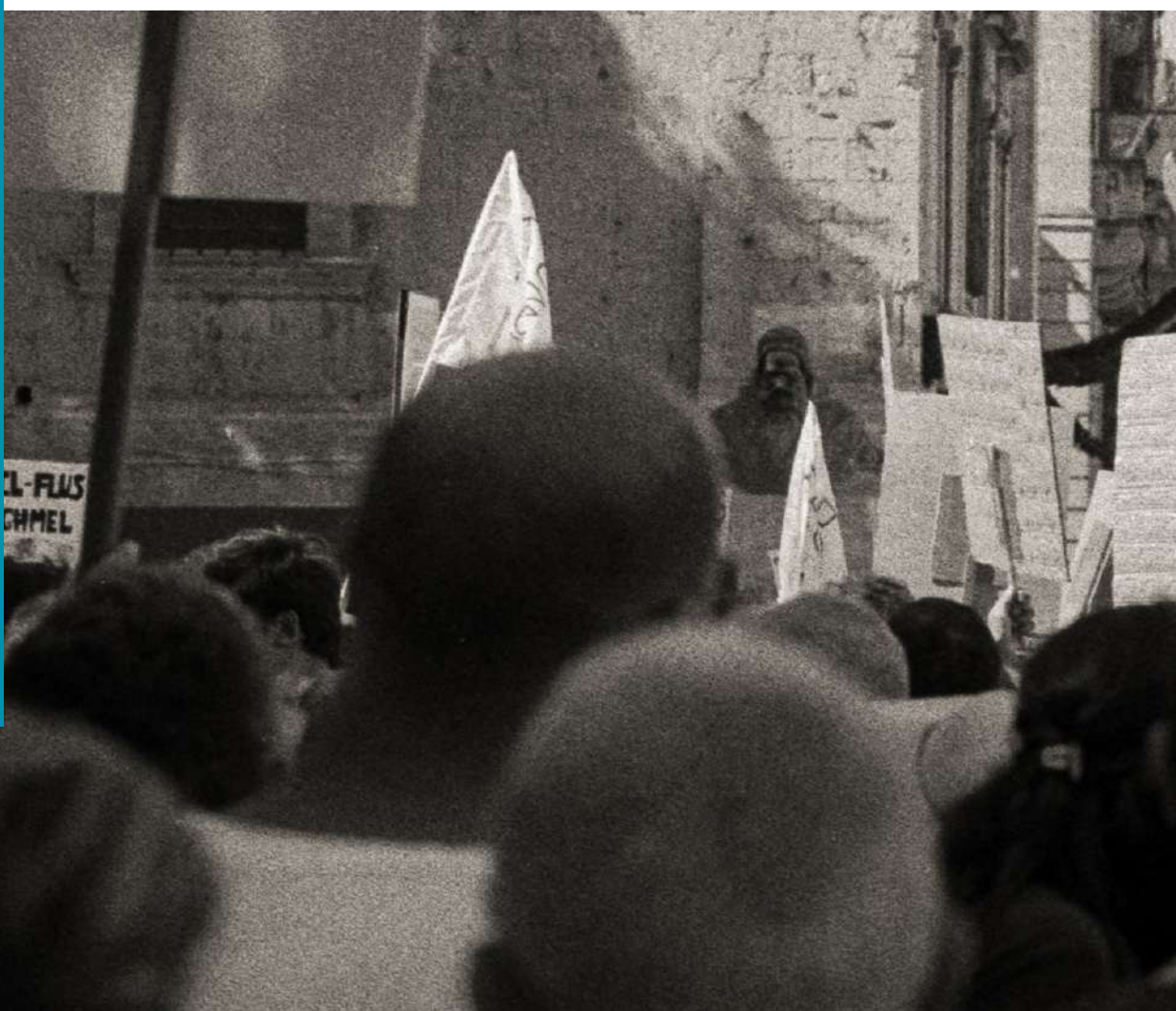
- The emptying of churches opens an invitation for us to create a culture of encounter, which embraces differences.
- We are also invited to let go of the nostalgia of the experience of a church long gone, and in humility, rebuild the Body of Christ with a sense of common purpose.
- Most urgently, we are called to follow Mary's example in sitting at the foot of the cross of suffering, and to insist more on prayer.

3. The Wounds in the Church as an Institution

The Church's wounds are found where its structures do not reflect the gospel. Pope Francis identified three deep wounds in the Church - sexual abuse, abuse of power and abuse of conscience. Each of these wounds stems from the clericalism¹⁰ that characterises the institutional Church (Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the People Of God, 20th August 2018).

4. The Wounds of the Ecclesia¹¹

Our wounds as the People of God are not only the sum of each person's wounds. As a people, we are marked with a sense of loss, confusion and lethargy. This is the result of giving more importance to our efforts than to the work of the Holy Spirit. As a community, we are also wounded when excluding specific groups in the very life of the Church by condemning them instead of accompanying them in their struggles.



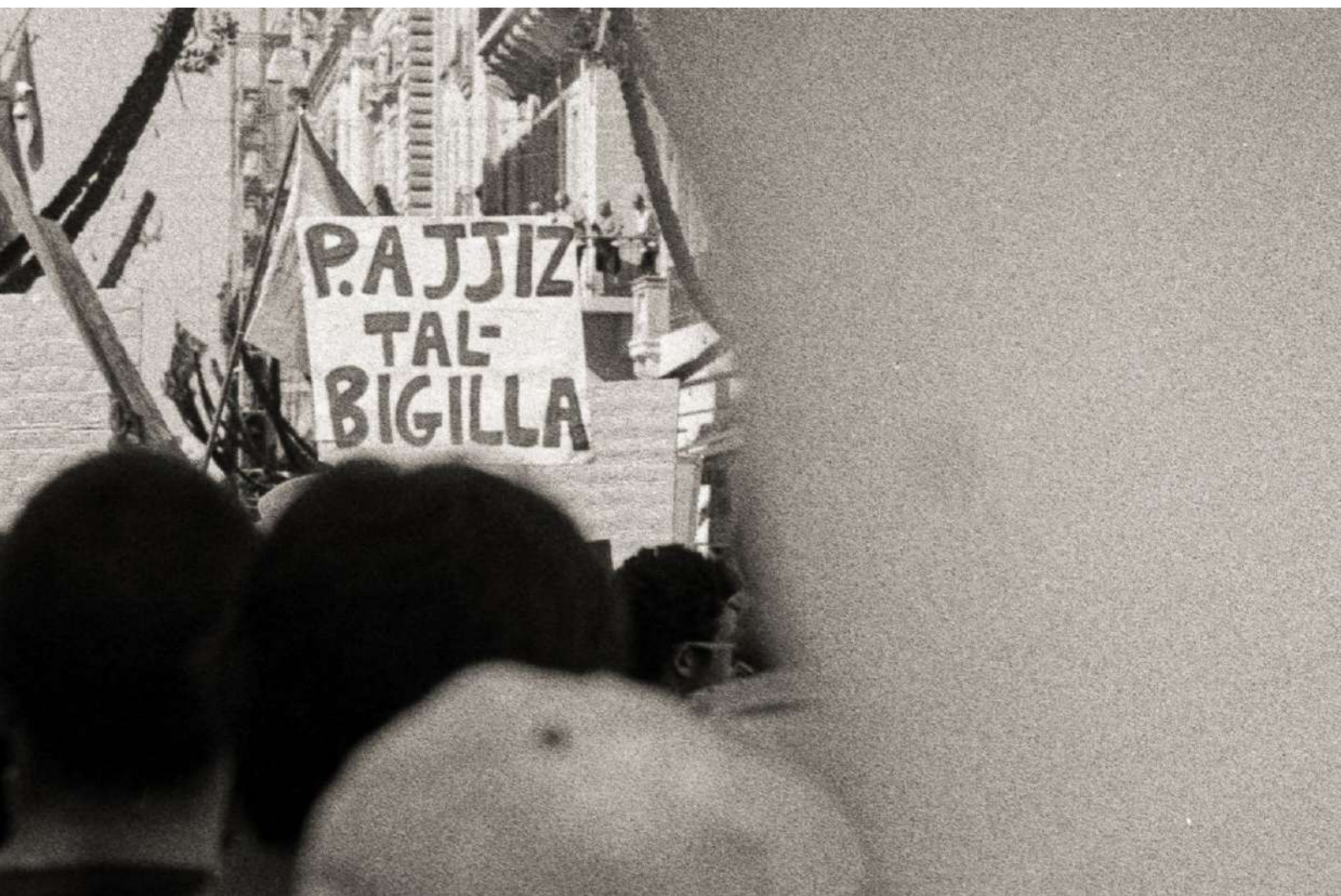
5. The Wounds of Our Social Fabric

The facts speak louder than words as our actions betray our ideals: the assassination of a journalist and the murder of a migrant; the way collective practices, like tax evasion, graft and *omertà*¹² are taken for granted; the frequency at which the social fabric is knit through “friends of friends”, amoral familism¹³ and *pjaçiri*; and the assumption that taking care of one’s own is more important than social responsibility. All of these show the gap between where we are and the Catholic ethos.

This is not because the institutional church does not speak on matters of the common good, but perhaps because in our social relationships as the People of God, we are failing in our witness of the gospel of life, both through the way we communicate and through the very way we live.

Invitation

This reality puts before us an urgent call to give sufficient witness through our concrete actions. Each of our choices ought to reflect the standards of the gospel. This conversion of our choices must begin with our learning about the Church’s social teachings that challenge us to be persons that seek justice over wealth, and wellbeing over comfort.



Invitation

- *First, we are called to be good stewards of the Earth, starting from our small daily decisions.*
- *Secondly, as a Church in a small land, we can be present in all of society effectively, and so take concrete steps in reversing the cycle of ecological decline.*

6. The Wounded Environment We Inhabit

The woundedness of our society is reflected in our very land. Our land is being butchered for economic gain, our streets are chaotic, and our air is dense with pollution. Our environment burdens our souls and makes daily life that much more distressing. This angst is also present in the digital realm, with the spaces we socialise in being marked with the ideal where image replaces reality and authenticity is undermined.

Invitation

As the People of God in Malta, we are called to:

- *Make our religious 'festi' a communal memory of religious devotion, and not displays of might.*
- *Make our daily and weekly liturgies deeply prayerful, and not akin to a performance.*
- *Make our temples memories in stone of our people's devotion, and not the symbol of the Church that needs care and maintenance.*


We are being invited to remember that it is the Holy Spirit who defines the Church, and that the Holy Spirit is the source of her true worship and prayer.

7. The Wounds in Our Spirit, Our Personal and Collective Soul

The source of our woundedness is ultimately sin - the pride that disconnects us from God. When we act as though God does not exist and we separate our spiritual lives from our earthly concerns, we wound the spirit within us that seeks transcendence¹⁴. Thus, this woundedness is visible in our prayer, both personal and communal.



8



C H A P T E R E I G H T

**A DISCERNMENT
PROMPTED BY
THE SPIRIT**



“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but

be transformed

by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Romans 12:2

The Church, acting as disciples of Christ who he sends out, demands judging and deciding not with our own eyes, but reading reality through God's eyes and thus allowing the Holy Spirit to conform us to the mind of Christ. Discernment¹ also requires the fundamental trust that it is the Spirit who acts through us, and therefore our efforts as a Church are never our own, and only for that reason will they bear fruit in God's time.

Christian discernment has multiple dimensions that we must seek to fulfil with the utmost desire for authenticity.

1. We discern and act as individuals in our personal matters.

- We are called to grow in disciplining the appetites of our body and soul, to grow in our conformity with Christ.

2. We discern on behalf of the wellbeing of those who are entrusted to our care.

- We are called to care for the other through the eyes of Christ, which means loving mercifully, not only in a spirit of justice.

3. We discern in our public roles, in which we are responsible not only for persons under our care, but also for the righteous functioning of institutions that must serve the common good.

- We are called to act in a way that respects the dignity of persons above and beyond anything else.

4. We discern in service of the good of our common home.

- We are called to reveal the beauty of creation reconciled by his love, which the Holy Spirit seeks to accomplish.

- 5. We discern in the domestic Church, or wherever small communities gather (families; religious communities bound to a convent or mission; small lay communities of friends).**
- 6. We discern in the parish, or where the People of God can gather in its totality of clergy, lay and religious (parishes, church schools, church institutions).**
 - We are called to discern how the Spirit is calling us to serve and go forth in our particular territory.
- 7. We discern in the religious provinces, congregations and lay movements bound by charism to the universal Church but present locally.**
 - We are called to discern how the particular spirit of service that characterises the community ought to be embodied locally, under the promptings of the Spirit.
- 8. We discern in the Archdiocese as a whole, starting from its Curial structures, but also through a process that guarantees true synodality¹⁵.**
 - We are called to be a Church that listens together, prays together and seeks to be truly open to becoming a medium for the Spirit's work together—no matter what the cost might be.

As the local Church, we are being invited to this conversion. We are called to renew our way of being “salt” in our land and “light” for its future. We are invited to do this by truly becoming a discerning People of God who act in his name.

THE ARCHDIOCESE'S COMMITMENT

Following a process of consultation with the faithful, including the participants at the Diocesan Assembly 2019, and inspired by the vision explained in Part I of One Church, One Journey, the Archdiocese of Malta is committing itself to initiating processes that will help sustain the efforts of every ecclesial community in Malta.

For each year, personally and communally, we are called to focus on one “verb” to grow in our missionary discipleship:

- The focus of 2021 will be **a Church that listens** - to the Word, to one another, and to our social reality.
- The focus of 2022 will be **a Church that welcomes**, and in welcoming every “other”, reconciles.
- The focus of 2023 will be **a Church that accompanies**, and therefore engages in ongoing Christian formation from cradle to tomb.
- The focus of 2024 will be **a Church that goes forth**, and becomes not only a more authentic prophetic light, but also hidden salt and life-giving leaven in our land.

Finally, at the Diocesan Assembly 2024, we will seek to remember God’s gestures of mercy to savour all ecclesial graces received, and to pray for signs to recognize where God will be calling his Church in Malta to continue her witness of the Good News. The Diocesan Assembly 2024 will launch a new process of “going forth” to respond to the times.

A full description of the Commitments of the Archdiocese for the next 4 years can be found on journey.church.mt/commitment

D E F I N I T I O N S

1. Discernment

Reflection and prayer that leads to decisions in keeping with God's plan for us. It is "an authentic process of leaving ourselves behind in order to approach the mystery of God, who helps us to carry out the mission to which he has called us, for the good of our brothers and sisters." (Pope Francis, *Gaudete et exsultate*, 175)

2. Discipleship

To be a follower of Christ – this means not only keeping the faith, but also being a witness to it and sharing it. (CCC 1816)

3. Pilgrim people

The Catholic Church on Earth, or the Church Militant. She is said to be on pilgrimage toward the Church Triumphant in heavenly glory.

4. Synod

A general term for gatherings of the institutional church under hierarchical authority, for the discussion of and decisions on matters relating to the doctrinal and pastoral needs of the Church.

5. Ecclesial

Pertaining to or of the Church. For example, the ecclesial community is the Church community.

6. Apostolic Exhortation

This is a letter, written by the pope, usually designed to clarify doctrinal matters in the Church, and to urge the Church to consider a particular spiritual matter.

7. Charism

Graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the Church - to bolster the building up of herself, to promote the good of men and to minister to the needs to the world.
(CCC 799)

8. Encyclical

This is a pastoral letter written by the pope to the whole Roman Catholic Church. The document is not considered to be infallible.

9. Stewardship

Exercising stewardship is being responsible guardians of the gifts God has given us.

10. Clericalism

Clericalism is a disordered attitude toward the Church hierarchy, marked by excessive submission and the assumption of the moral superiority of certain people. This attitude can be held by clerics and laypeople alike.

11. Ecclesia

The Greek/Latin word for Church.

12. Omertà

A code of silence about criminal activity and a refusal to give evidence to the police.

13. Familism

A form of social structure in which the needs of the family as a group are more important than the needs of any individual

family member.

14. Transcendence/transcendent nature

Our human nature as beings created in the image and likeness of God is oriented to a special grace-filled relationship with God, culminating in eternal life.

15. Synodality

The act of walking together as one Church.

mcyn

malta catholic youth network